

MEDIA RELEASE

**IMCRC Design Robotics project wins Excellence in Innovation Award**

*CRC Association's 2020 Award presented to Urban Art Projects, Queensland University of Technology and RMIT University.*

**Melbourne, 21 October 2021:** The Innovative Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre (IMCRC) congratulates its 'Design Robotics for Mass Customisation' team on winning the Cooperative Research Centre Association's 2020 Award for Excellence in Innovation.

Presented at this year's Cooperative Research Australia (CRA) *Collaborate | Innovate 2021* conference, the award recognises outstanding examples of research collaboration that address industry-specific problems for the benefit of Australian industry and the economy.

With funding from IMCRC, in 2017, Brisbane-based design and manufacturing company Urban Art Projects (UAP) embarked on an \$8 million design robotics research project in partnership with Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and RMIT University (RMIT).

By investing in robotic vision systems and developing smart user-interfaces, UAP streamlined its ability to manufacture bespoke artwork and architecture pieces here in Australia. As part of the project, UAP also opened its factory doors to local manufacturing SMEs to share research outcomes and education on how robots and other emerging technologies can assist in manufacturing high-value products. This 'open innovation' approach led to the formation of the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) Hub in Brisbane.

QUT Associate Professor Jared Donovan, who accepted the award on behalf of the Design Robotics team, thanked all participants for their contributions to the project.

"In the IMCRC Design Robotics project, we set out to 'Make Robots See' – to combine the power of robotic vision and design-led manufacturing to enable highly custom and bespoke manufacturing," he said.

"This is the 30th anniversary of the CRC program and innovative, collaborative, industry-led, research is more important now than ever.

"As a researcher, it has been an absolute honour to have worked with such a fantastic industry partner as UAP. I also want to thank the teams at IMCRC, RMIT and QUT. Without you this would not have been possible."

Matthew Tobin, Founder and Managing Director of UAP, who couldn't attend the award presentation, said that the Design Robotics project had been transformational for UAP.

"The outcomes and cultural change that working with QUT, RMIT and IMCRC has delivered to UAP have fundamentally changed the way we think about manufacturing and will continue to influence our digital transformation in the years to come," he said.

"We think about the University staff as explorers, and we think about the IMCRC framework as a discipline. And both those things add great value to our transformation journey."

CEO and Managing Director of IMCRC, David Chuter, congratulated the Design Robotics team on being recognised for their outstanding achievement in addressing the gap between innovation in digital design and the realities of manufacturing.

“The Excellence in Innovation Award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of UAP’s bold move to break with design manufacturing tradition, and the Design Robotics team that pushed so many boundaries by pairing human creativity with the efficiency of robots,” said Chuter.

“With many CRC projects, you only start to see the impact of the research years later. The Design Robotics project is different; not only has it already helped UAP to achieve a greater competitive advantage through high-value product development and transformed manufacturing processes, but also by being the catalyst for establishing the Advanced Manufacturing in Robotics (ARM) Hub where manufacturers can explore robotics and design-led manufacturing.

“I also want to acknowledge and congratulate Cooperative Research Australia for supporting our industry with this Award, and on reaching its 30-year milestone of facilitating research collaboration.”

The CRA presented three Awards for Excellence in Innovation. IMCRC also congratulates the CRC for Alertness, Safety and Productivity and the Oral Health CRC, for being recognised for their successful work in research collaboration and translation.

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### **About IMCRC**

IMCRC is an independent and for-impact cooperative research centre with a successful, proven and scalable model for incentivising research and business partnerships that drives transformative commercial outcomes for participating Australian manufacturers. To date, IMCRC has successfully co-invested in more than 60 industry-led R&D projects, catalysing around \$220 million in transformative manufacturing research. Find out more at [www.imcrc.org](http://www.imcrc.org)

### **About UAP**

Urban Art Projects (UAP) is design and manufacturing company that is recognised world-round as a leader in public art and architectural design solutions. UAP assists in every stage of the design process, with facilities including design studios, robotics and innovation hubs, factories, foundries, and an international network of engineers, installers and suppliers, extending the full length of a project’s development and lifespan. More at [www.uapcompany.com](http://www.uapcompany.com)

### **About QUT**

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is a major Australian university with a truly global outlook. Home to nearly 50,000 students, we’re providing real-world infrastructure, learning and teaching, and graduate skills to the next generation of change-makers. More at [www.qut.edu.au](http://www.qut.edu.au)

### **About RMIT**

RMIT is a global university of technology, design and enterprise. One of Australia’s original tertiary institutions, RMIT University enjoys an international reputation for excellence in education, research, and engagement with industry and community. More at [www.rmit.edu.au](http://www.rmit.edu.au)

### **About Cooperative Research Australia (CRA)**

The CRA strengthens and promotes the transformative potential of collaborative, industry-led research through knowledge exchange, professional development and advocacy. The CRA was established in 1994 as the Cooperative Research Centres Association. More at [www.cooperativeresearch.org.au](http://www.cooperativeresearch.org.au)

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